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MONTANA LABOR MARKET

Monthly Review of
EMPLOYMENT OUTLOOK, LABOR SUPPLY, LABOR DEMAND, CURRENT EMPLOYMENT

MONTANA STATE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE

Division of Unemployment Compensation Commission of Montana

Edgar H. Reeder, Chairman

James J. Flaherty, Commissioner UCC Building—P.O. Box 1728—Helena, Montana Fredric D. Moulton, Commissioner

FL. 288

OCTOBER, 1968

1968 EMPLOYMENT PEAK HIGHEST ON RECORD

JOB TOTALS STAY HIGH — For the third consecutive month, non-farm employment in Montana has been over the 200,000 mark. This is the first time that such a record has ever been established in Montana. Non-farm job totals, responding to widespread hiring in most industry groups, went over the 200,000 level in July, climbed to a peak of 202,700 in August, and after some seasonal changes in September had 201,100 wage earners on non-farm payrolls for that month. The August job peak was the highest non-farm employment total ever achieved in Montana. It was 22,300 above last February when employment in the state was at the seasonal low. During the past three months worker shortages especially in logging and lumbering, and in trade and service firms went unchecked.

SOME SEASONAL ADJUSTMENTS — Seasonal declines common to this time of the year started to show during September, but not with the force of past years. The strength of the overall employment picture overshadowed these seasonal factors. The end of the tourist season and closure of facilities at national parks and resort areas were mainly responsible for over the month changes in trade and service firms. Significantly, there were 1,100 fewer workers on service industry payrolls during September. Trade establishments showed a decline of 400 workers in line with the season.

CONSTRUCTION STILL ACTIVE — Contract construction was still an

active force on the statewide labor market scene. After a drop of 300 workers from August payrolls, a total work force of 13,100 still remained on a variety of building and road projects. Work on most will continue as long as weather conditions remain favorable for outdoor work. Some major projects were completed including expansion of facilities at the Columbia Falls aluminum plant, and major bridge construction near Glendive. Employment figures on Libby Dam projects were adjusting downward for the winter season, with approximately 1,700 still on payrolls there. New building starts were underway at Butte, Columbia Falls, Bozeman, Browning, and Ronan, among others.

FEDERAL JOBS DOWN; OTHER GOV'T. UP — There were 500 fewer federal government employees in September than in August. This seasonal decline reflects the windup of summer work in national parks, the forest service, irrigation services, and other federal activities. An over-the-month gain of 2,000 workers in state and local government ties in with the start of another school term resulting in the hiring of new teachers, school bus drivers, custodians, school lunch program personnel and others.

LOGGING & LUMBERING KEEP ACTIVE TRENDS — The lumber industry holds on to the high volume of activity following the end of the spring break-up period last May. Shortages of experienced timber fallers and logging equipment operators have

been common during the past three months. The demand for these workers still continues in some areas at this late season of the year. More jobs became available at major lumber and plywood mills as students hired for summer work left jobs to return to school. The reopening of a plywood mill at Polson, closed since last year, will add to the economy of the area. The Christmas tree harvest is now underway in northwestern Montana. Cutting, sorting, grading, and baling of the trees plus the manufacture of decorative materials will provide seasonal jobs for approximately 1,000 workers.

BUSY FARM & RANCH SEASON WINDING UP — A variety of grain, fruit, and vegetable harvests created a heavy demand for agricultural workers during September. Some grain harvests which were delayed by wet weather earlier carried through September. The processing of the sugar beet crop required 1,400 workers at Billings, Hardin, and Sidney sugar refineries. Shortages of truck drivers developed at Billings and Sidney. Other farm worker shortages were still prevalent in other areas of the state.

INSURED UNEMPLOYMENT AMONG LOWEST IN U.S. — At mid-October, 1.2% of Montana's insured work force was unemployed compared with a national average of 1.5%. Twenty-nine other states had a higher ratio of insured unemployment than did Montana.

LABOR TURNOVER RATES IN MANUFACTURING AND MINING INDUSTRIES (Per 100 Employees)

(Compiled in cooperation with U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics)

INDUSTRY	ACCESSION RATE						SEPARATION RATE								
	Total			New Hire			Total			Quit			Layoff		
	Aug. 1968	July 1968	Aug. 1967	Aug. 1968	July 1968	Aug. 1967	Aug. 1968	July 1968	Aug. 1967	Aug. 1968	July 1968	Aug. 1967	Aug. 1968	July 1968	Aug. 1967
All Manufacturing	4.2	4.7	5.7	3.9	4.2	5.6	5.9	3.3	6.9	4.3	2.1	4.5	.7	.3	1.5
Durable Goods	4.5	5.2	6.6	4.2	5.0	6.4	6.8	4.1	8.1	5.0	2.6	5.6	.7	.2	1.2
Primary Metal	5.5	5.6	1.5	4.5	5.0	1.4	5.2	4.0	6.6	3.5	1.8	5.6	*	*	.4
Nondurable Goods	3.8	3.3	4.1	3.6	2.5	4.0	4.1	1.6	4.8	3.0	1.1	2.3	.8	.5	2.0
All Mining	6.4	7.6	7.3	4.2	1.9	6.5	11.2	7.4	9.6	5.9	1.4	4.4	3.0	1.6	2.2
Metal Mining	3.2	4.9	.7	.6	.5	.5	3.7	4.6	7.7	1.4	1.1	1.7	.2	.5	5.2

* Less than .05.

Along the Hiring Line— Field Summary for Sept.

ANACONDA, Deer Lodge, Philipsburg—Economic trends starting to show more life as new hiring activity at smelter operations picks up. Job placements up in most major industry groups with smelter and trade at the head of the list. Bad weather during part of the month created some new unemployment, especially in construction and timber activities. Fair farm labor demand.

BILLINGS, Columbus, Hardin, Laurel, Red Lodge, Roundup—Record job levels apparent in most industry groups during September. Construction keeps strong trends as work continues on variety of commercial, educational, and trade buildings. About 400 workers on highway construction projects. Trade and service groups maintain brisk hiring pace with some worker shortages. Sugar beet harvest main activity on the farm front with continuing shortages of truck drivers.

BOZEMAN, Ennis, Three Forks, Trident—College students seeking part time work increased new applications by more than one third during September. Except for railroads, job trends in industry hold at firm levels. Benefits of tourist traffic on trade firms now gone but offset by influx of 7,000 college students. Logging and mill employment at good force. Farm labor demand active.

BUTTE, Virginia City, Whitehall—Labor market trends gradually firming up with copper industry back in the employment picture the past six months. Construction and opening of new trade firms adds to a favorable economic climate. New work applications down 161 from last year. Farm labor demand not too sharp.

CUT BANK—Some new unemployment occurred in September due to start of seasonal layoffs. Industry job placements, however, up from last month. Farm job placements doubled last year's total. New industries at Browning show good job potential.

DILLON—Work in farm and industry kept at good volume during September. Current building projects include sawmill, grade school, college library, and physical education building, church addition, and three new homes. Five-mile highway project

Civilian Work Force	Sept. 68	Aug. 68	Sept. 67	Aug. 68 to Sept. 68	Sept. 67 to Sept. 68
Total Employment	273.1	282.9	278.9	—9.8	—5.8
Total Non-agricultural Employment	231.4	233.7	225.8	—2.3	5.6
(Non-agricultural Wage & Salary)	201.1	202.7	195.4	—1.6	5.7
Total Agricultural Employment	32.1	38.6	36.0	—6.5	—3.9
Labor Management Disputes	.1	.1	7.6	—	—7.5
Total Unemployment	9.5	10.5	9.5	—1.0	—
Percent Unemployment	3.5	3.7	3.4	—	—
U. S. Unemployment Rate	—	3.5	3.7	—	—

awaits new bids. Farm job placements near the 100 mark.

GLASGOW, Fort Peck, Malta, Opheim—Fairly high employment totals maintained despite some weather caused interruptions in construction and farm work. Phase out of Glasgow Air Force Base reduced labor demand on main street. Economy also feels effect of closed meat packing plant.

GLENDIVE, Circle, Wibaux—Construction continued as major labor market force during September. Some worker shortages developed as activity increased. Work on major bridges nearing completion. Oil oriented jobs up with some seismograph crews and start of oil pipeline. Main street business good with shortages of cooks and waitresses. Sugar beet harvest and refining underway.

GREAT FALLS, Choteau, Fort Benton, Stanford—Unemployment at a seasonal low as good job trends generated by most industry segments. September job openings most prevalent in trade firms, followed by the service and manufacturing groups. Weekly hires continued at the smelter. Farm placements were near 400 mark with worker shortages common during the month.

HAMILTON, Stevensville—Wet weather caused some temporary construction layoffs and held up start of work on new projects. Clearing weather will bring more job demands with steady work schedules until winter sets in. Main street hiring at steady pace despite drop in tourist trade. Farm labor jobs tapering off with completion of harvest and fall seeding.

HELENA, Boulder, Garrison, Townsend, White Sulphur Springs—Regis-

tration of college students for part time work added to labor supply during September. Activity in trade and service firms at fairly good levels. Several building projects and interstate highway construction on good schedules. Farm labor demand slow.

KALISPELL, Columbia Falls, Whitefish—Completion of some major construction, mainly aluminum plant expansion, created surplus of carpenters, electricians, and welders. Smaller projects in progress include commercial buildings and homes. Logging and sawmill operations kept active; shortages of logging equipment operators and skilled workers were evident. Trade and service payrolls adjusting downward after tourist season.

LEWISTOWN, Harlowton, Ryegate, Winnett—Missile remodification work gives good boost to economy with 385 employed on this activity. Good agenda of building projects in area. All make for brisk trends on main street; shortage of cooks, waitresses, and maids noted. Farm job placements show good upturn from last year.

LIBBY—Libby Dam project work forces being reduced in line with season. Surplus of workers now exists in all occupations. Logging and mill job totals at good seasonal levels. Main street trends firm with no worker shortages.

LIVINGSTON, Big Timber—Hiring in many industries depressed by cold, wet weather during the month. Some construction hiring for work in Yellowstone Park and Cooke City. Contract for \$891,000 road project in Gardiner area probably will not start until spring. Fairly good demand for main street help. Log shortages kept mills on unsteady schedules.

NINE YEARS OF MONTANA INDUSTRIAL EMPLOYMENT TOTALS BY MONTHS (in Thousands)

	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Aver.
1956	156.6	151.1	156.3	163.0	169.3	177.1	177.1	179.8	177.2	171.6	170.4	166.7	168.6
1957	156.8	155.0	156.8	161.3	166.0	172.0	171.2	174.2	170.8	167.4	163.2	159.9	161.8
1958	153.1	150.3	150.5	156.4	162.1	167.1	170.2	172.2	170.0	168.8	165.8	162.4	162.4
1959	155.3	153.2	155.9	162.2	167.5	171.0	177.5	179.2	169.9	165.6	161.5	159.4	165.1
1960	152.7	152.5	156.1	163.5	168.1	175.8	176.9	177.7	171.8	171.6	167.5	161.5	166.8
1961	156.9	151.8	156.1	160.2	165.1	173.3	176.0	178.1	176.8	172.4	169.0	162.2	167.1
1962	158.3	158.2	159.6	166.2	172.1	180.1	180.5	181.2	178.6	176.6	175.1	173.5	171.7
1963	163.9	163.0	165.0	170.2	175.1	181.0	182.3	183.8	181.5	179.7	176.6	173.6	171.6
1964	166.2	161.3	165.1	169.1	171.2	182.1	185.5	187.2	184.9	182.2	178.4	175.4	176.2
1965	167.9	167.4	168.9	171.4	179.8	188.7	189.6	192.1	189.9	188.1	185.3	183.6	181.3
1966	173.9	172.6	174.2	180.2	186.4	195.6	198.2	199.2	195.8	191.2	187.6	186.9	186.7
1967	179.9	178.5	180.1	184.6	188.7	199.0	201.4	196.6	195.1	193.8	191.7	189.7	189.9
1968	181.0	180.4	181.8	187.5	192.2	199.0	200.9	202.7	201.4*				

*Preliminary Estimate—

Along the Hiring Line— Field Summary for Sept.

MILES CITY, Baker, Broadus, Ekalaka, Jordan, Terry — Seasonal job peaks evident in all industry groups. Worker shortages being relieved by workers from other areas. Main street business at good volume aided by oil oriented activities at Bell Creek field. Good seasonal farm labor demand.

MISSOULA, Arlee, Drummond, Superior—Industry job placements stay on steady keel with some decline in trade offset by increased construction hiring. Good volume of building construction in progress. Farm placements show moderate gain from year ago totals.

POLSON—Labor market conditions this September did not match the vigor of year ago. Heavy layoffs by an irrigation project coupled with declines in construction and woods work created more new unemployment. On the farm front, the sweet cherry crop did not match last year's yields. Projected re-opening of plywood plant should give economy a boost. Farm labor demand at low ebb.

SHELBY — Job opportunities now starting to recede with the approaching winter season. Farm and ranch activities, delayed by rain the prior month, picked up in September resulting in 124 job placements. Construction activity at minimum with little demand for help. Main street back to normal trends after tourist season ended.

SIDNEY — High employment levels reached in local industries during September. Increased activity in construction and oil fields, plus start of sugar beet harvest and processing, ran into worker shortages. 465 workers on sugar plant payrolls. Construction in shape of two bank buildings, gas plant, and sugar beet campaign advances.

THOMPSON FALLS, Hot Springs—Demand for labor in sawmills and construction in good force during the month. Trade and service jobs remain at good seasonal levels. Unemployment claims at seasonal low. Weather will be key factor in determining employment directions next two months.

WOLF POINT, Plentywood, Scobey—Construction jobs increased as contractors rushed to complete or enclose building jobs prior to cold weather. Increased activity in oil exploration and drilling created more worker demand. Replacement hiring continued on main street as students left jobs for school. Good farm labor demand trends found some worker shortages.

- (1) Estimates include all full and part-time wage and salary workers who worked or received pay during the pay period ending nearest the 15th of the month. Proprietors, firm members, personnel of the armed forces, domestic servants and self-employed persons are excluded.
- (2) Preliminary estimates based on return from samples of 752 selected Montana establishments.
- (3) Figures previously released have been revised on return from 1,103 such establishments.
- (4) Includes fabricated metal products, machinery except electrical, furniture, stone and clay products.

ESTIMATED EMPLOYMENT IN NON-AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRIES IN MONTANA (1)

(Compiled in cooperation with United States Bureau of Labor Statistics)

INDUSTRY	EMPLOYMENT			NET CHANGE	
	Sept. 1968 (2)	Aug. 1968 (3)	Sept. 1967	Aug. '68 to Sept. '68	Sept. '67 Against Sept. '68
NON-AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRIES	201,100	202,700	195,400	-1,600	5,700
Manufacturing	25,000	25,100	21,800	- 100	3,200
Durable goods	17,300	17,300	13,800	00	3,500
Lumber and timber products	9,400	9,500	9,500	- 100	- 100
Primary metals	4,700	4,600	1,700	100	3,000
Other (4)	3,200	3,200	2,600	00	600
Nondurable goods	7,700	7,800	8,000	- 100	- 300
Food and kindred products	4,000	4,100	4,200	- 100	- 200
Printing and publishing	1,600	1,600	1,700	00	- 100
Petroleum refining	1,100	1,100	1,100	00	00
Other (5)	1,000	1,000	1,000	00	00
Mining	5,700	5,700	3,600	00	2,100
Metal mining	3,000	3,000	1,100	00	1,900
Coal, quarrying and nonmetallic	900	900	900	00	00
Petroleum-natural gas production	1,800	1,800	1,600	00	200
Contract Construction	13,100	13,400	14,500	- 300	-1,400
Contractors, building construction	4,300	4,400	4,600	- 100	- 300
Contractors, other than building	4,700	4,900	5,500	- 200	- 800
Contractors, special trade	4,100	4,100	4,400	00	- 300
Transportation and utilities	18,400	18,500	18,400	- 100	00
Interstate railroads	7,000	7,100	7,200	- 100	- 200
Transportation except railroads	5,000	5,000	4,800	00	200
Utilities including communication	6,400	6,400	6,400	00	00
Trade	47,000	47,400	46,500	- 400	500
Wholesale trade	9,400	9,400	9,000	00	400
Retail trade	37,600	38,000	37,500	- 400	100
General merchandise and apparel	6,900	6,900	6,900	00	00
Food stores	5,500	5,500	5,400	00	100
Eating and drinking establishments	10,300	10,600	10,100	- 300	200
Automotive and filling stations	7,900	7,900	7,900	00	00
Retail trade not elsewhere classified	7,000	7,100	7,200	- 100	- 200
Finance, insurance and real estate	7,500	7,500	7,400	00	100
Services and miscellaneous	29,500	30,600	29,800	-1,100	- 300
Hotels, rooming houses, camps, etc.	4,200	4,600	4,000	- 400	200
Personal services	2,000	2,100	2,200	- 100	- 200
Other (6)	23,300	23,900	23,600	- 600	- 300
Government	54,900	54,500	53,400	400	1,500
Federal	13,200	13,800	13,700	- 600	- 500
State and local	41,700	40,700	39,700	1,000	2,000
Great Falls Area (Cascade County)	25,600	25,600	23,300	00	2,300
*Manufacturing	3,900	3,900	2,500	00	1,400
Contract construction	2,500	2,600	2,600	- 100	- 100
Transportation and utilities	2,100	2,000	2,200	100	- 100
Trade, wholesale and retail	6,600	6,600	6,200	00	400
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	1,500	1,500	1,400	00	100
Services and miscellaneous (7)	4,100	4,100	3,900	00	200
Government	4,900	4,900	4,500	00	400
Billings Area (Yellowstone County)	27,700	27,800	27,300	- 100	400
Manufacturing	2,900	3,000	3,000	- 100	- 100
Contract construction	1,700	1,700	1,900	00	- 200
Transportation and utilities	3,000	3,000	3,000	00	00
Trade, wholesale and retail	8,900	8,900	8,400	00	500
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	1,400	1,400	1,400	00	00
Services and miscellaneous (7)	5,200	5,300	5,200	- 100	00
Government	4,600	4,500	4,400	100	200

*Copper strike started 7/15/67

(5) Includes apparel, chemicals, and miscellaneous manufacturing products.

(6) Includes commercial trade schools, auto repair services and garages, miscellaneous repair services and hand trades, motion pictures, amusements and recreation,

medical and health, law offices and professional services, non-profit membership organizations and business not otherwise classified.

(7) Same as (6) above. Also includes hotels, rooming houses, camps, personal services and mining.

COMPARISON OF BASIC LABOR MARKET ACTIVITIES IN SEPTEMBER, 1968 & SEPTEMBER, 1967

Employment Service Office	New Job Applicants				Jobseekers in File				Job Placements								UI Claims*	
	Sept. 1968		Sept. 1967		Sept. 1968		Sept. 1967		September, 1968				September, 1967				Wk. 9-27	
	Tot.	Vet.	Tot.	Vet.	Tot.	Vet.	Tot.	Vet.	Ind.	Ag.	Tot.	Vet.	Ind.	Ag.	Tot.	Vet.	1968	1967
Anaconda	147	22	107	34	323	59	796	149	45	7	52	14	56	8	64	21	63	97
Billings	570	183	637	226	1,016	304	1,130	317	611	431	1,045	360	549	341	890	356	309	349
Bozeman	358	82	231	37	189	33	191	18	269	74	343	108	269	48	317	71	25	29
Butte	229	65	390	128	1,019	279	965	261	12	4	46	6	324	17	341	204	294	423
Cut Bank	85	18	36	5	236	65	97	20	48	76	124	58	67	31	98	53	56	22
Dillon	90	31	91	33	76	19	120	16	38	93	131	68	45	102	147	79	21	18
Glasgow	52	6	65	16	64	5	68	8	80	39	119	24	106	16	122	39	38	23
Glendive	84	2	52	4	43	1	95	8	76	41	120	49	37	23	60	14	5	29
Great Falls	686	152	727	131	1,228	267	1,336	247	506	389	895	210	618	240	858	247	291	285
Hamilton	55	7	67	17	88	17	67	20	40	35	75	14	60	38	98	26	39	32
Havre	95	10	51	3	99	17	60	6	95	190	285	67	112	112	224	49	13	29
Helena	345	54	321	52	650	137	466	72	159	35	194	53	179	26	205	64	98	89
Kalispell	276	68	299	65	514	147	273	44	227	51	278	101	501	41	512	169	196	74
Lewistown	63	13	58	17	53	7	69	13	72	100	172	36	54	49	103	26	20	18
Libby	184	46	79	21	210	70	225	57	64	—	64	30	125	—	125	50	113	116
Livingston	79	14	61	8	100	13	76	9	82	36	118	28	123	21	144	48	18	14
Miles City	116	26	106	27	143	18	108	14	103	39	142	35	76	29	105	32	24	12
Missoula	695	156	739	205	1,126	277	1,039	272	292	38	330	102	854	32	886	325	155	144
Polson	65	22	55	15	113	28	75	16	50	8	58	24	56	7	63	27	47	23
Shelby	26	7	52	23	39	12	40	6	36	124	160	38	62	46	108	42	12	12
Sidney	63	15	39	6	68	3	52	3	73	37	110	19	67	38	105	27	7	10
Thompson Falls	29	5	39	13	39	5	38	9	41	—	41	11	69	—	69	38	24	14
Wolf Point	41	12	44	13	66	18	51	12	22	56	78	14	25	21	46	15	14	20
Billings YOC	281	11	258	16	523	14	518	26	187	26	213	7	154	13	167	13	—	—
TOTALS	4,717	1,027	4,607	1,115	8,025	1,806	7,955	1,623	3,258	1,935	5,193	1,476	4,588	1,299	5,887	2,035	1,912	1,882

* Includes 174 Claims of the Fed. U.C. Program 104 same a year ago.

AVERAGE HOURS AND EARNINGS IN SELECTED MONTANA INDUSTRIES

(Produced in cooperation with United States Bureau of Labor Statistics)

(Hours and earnings data exclude administrative and salaried personnel)

INDUSTRY	Average Weekly Earnings			Average Weekly Hours			Average Hourly Earnings		
	Sept. (1) 1968	Aug. (2) 1968	Sept. 1967	Sept. (1) 1968	Aug. (2) 1968	Sept. 1967	Sept. (1) 1968	Aug. (2) 1968	Sept. 1967
All Manufacturing	136.86	137.25	125.85	41.6	42.1	39.7	3.29	3.26	3.17
Durable Goods	134.05	135.24	125.64	41.5	42.0	40.4	3.23	3.22	3.11
Primary Metals	126.96	129.20	*	39.8	40.5	*	3.19	3.19	*
Nondurable Goods	145.94	145.00	124.97	42.3	42.9	38.1	3.45	3.38	3.28
Food and Kindred Products	137.81	136.14	113.59	44.6	44.2	38.9	3.09	3.08	2.92
All Mining	135.90	138.16	127.66	39.8	39.7	39.4	3.49	3.48	3.24
Metal Mining	135.14	134.75	*	39.4	39.4	*	3.43	3.42	*
Transportation and									
Utilities (except Rys.)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Transportation (except Railroads)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Utilities and Communications	132.43	132.02	120.51	41.0	41.0	39.0	3.23	3.22	3.09

(1) Preliminary estimates. (2) Figures previously released have been revised on more complete returns.

* Data not available due to copper strike.

UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION
COMMISSION OF MONTANAUCC BUILDING
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